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John R. Broderick

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President John R. Broderick

Wednesday, August 21, 2019

Good morning, and welcome to my 12th State of the University address.

In many traditions, the number 12 carries great significance - the apostles, the tribes of Israel, the signs of the Chinese zodiac. And, of course, to those of us who are New England Patriots fans, the jersey for Tom Brady.

In some belief systems, 12 actually signifies a sense of completion.

However, we are far from done with our work. So while you finish breakfast, I will recount several milestones, while clarifying existing initiatives and promising new ventures to fulfill our ambitions [to](#) empower our region as well as our students.

I hope you leave here invigorated in helping Old Dominion reach higher ground.

Let me begin by sharing both a learning and research project that produced a tiny object with a huge reach. Some 50 of our students designed a CubeSat to measure atmospheric conditions for NASA. It was deployed last month from the International Space Station, allowing ODU students to say on their resume they built a Nano satellite.

And here's one result: Kim Wright, a Perry Honors College graduate and the recipient of two ODU degrees, was hired as a flight controller for Mission Control in Houston. With that career start, I would say the universe is her limit.

While focusing on Kim, I could have mentioned hundreds of other students, who - with faculty encouragement and guidance - gained valuable experience through internships and research projects, many times leading, most importantly, to a job.

A program exemplifying this model of campus and industry learning is cybersecurity. In four years, enrollment has grown - now listen to this - from 11 to 465, in part because students know they will receive an outstanding education while being almost guaranteed a job. With Michael Wu's and Brian



Payne's guidance, we are also now designated as a Center of Academic Excellence by the National Security Agency. That's quite an accomplishment in a very short amount of time.

Switching gears, not many universities are starting museums these days, but that's what occurred in November with the opening of the Barry Art Museum. The museum offers a robust collection, from glass sculptures to antique dolls, and sponsors numerous educational activities, benefiting community and visitors alike.

Speaking of campus guests, 150 colleagues from 15 states came in June for the second annual National Symposium on Social Mobility. For low-income and first-generation students, a college degree can radically transform their families' financial status for generations. This May, nearly 25 percent of our graduates were first-generation students.

With our Center for Social Mobility, we are elevating the importance of ensuring more access and opportunity, as well as financial aid. For too many students, the primary obstacle is affordability, not ability.

In this regard, we are doing our best as the most affordable Virginia doctoral institution.

Graduation statistics will always be scrutinized, so I am delighted to share with you this morning that Old Dominion was ranked 14th in the country in the number of African American students who graduate each year, according to the journal *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*.

In fact, we can say 70 percent of our students obtain a degree, but because of financial, military, job and family-related challenges, some don't fit perfectly into national measures.

Yet, truly, if you think about it, what is more important than degree attainment, especially if Virginia is serious about remaining the nation's most educated state?

We are a diverse campus of learners and scholars. I never waver from believing diversity and inclusivity benefits everyone by inspiring richer dialogue, greater creativity and deeper understanding of other perspectives, including those of adult, international and military students.

I say at every admissions event that we prepare students by superbly educating them in an environment where they also gain great life lessons by interacting with people who may not look like them or come from the same state or even the same country.

Young people are constantly told about the world they will have to compete in, but how about the world they will also have to partner in? And how can they partner, if they have not been exposed to the various points of view that exist here? So I look forward to faculty-led discussions this fall that will inform and challenge students about the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans to our country in nearby Jamestown.

Before I leave the subject of diversity, let me acknowledge Vice President September Sanderlin, who now leads our efforts for the Office of Equity and Diversity, which includes Title IX. This is a smooth and coordinated handoff from ReNee Dunman, who contributed mightily to making ODU the welcoming place it is today. Thank you both for your efforts.

To further accelerate our financial momentum, we must continue augmenting the Commonwealth's general fund contribution, although we have now reached that elusive 100 percent mark for base funding.

This, indeed, was a mighty hill to climb from 72 percent, especially when, for several years, education support was limited or nonexistent.

In our proposed six-year plan, we seek greater support for student financial aid, faculty-staff salaries, new facilities and funding to hire and retain more people - especially in critical disciplines, plus academic coaching and advising.

On the fundraising side, we have achieved remarkable progress in two years by raising an impressive \$160 million toward our \$250 million goal. Vice President Alonzo Brandon on the education side and Jena Virga on the athletic side - along with their colleagues - have been doing great work!

To put this progress in perspective, allow me to mention a few highlights:

- Thanks to a \$4 million-plus agreement with Chartway Federal Credit Union, you are now sitting in the Chartway Arena. Chartway has also established a scholarship for athletes.
- A donor-advised fund, created by Harvey Lindsay's late wife, Frances, has provided a significant gift to establish the Harvey Lindsay School of Real Estate.
- With a \$3 million commitment from the Hampton Roads Community Foundation's Diehn Fund, in addition to previous support, we have renamed our outstanding music program the F. Ludwig Diehn Music School. I would like to ask our friends at Chartway, Harvey Lindsay and his family members and representatives of the community foundation to stand so we can thank them. It's an honor to have you here, Harvey.

And I am pleased to share another donation, which will take our globally recognized work in sea level rise and flooding resiliency to new levels. Our longtime friend and graduate Joan Brock, who, with her late husband, Macon, made Brock Commons possible, is donating \$3 million to the Institute for Coastal Adaptation and Resilience. Joan, would you stand so we can thank you?

Joan's gift will allow us to parlay our expertise by hiring an international thought leader as the institute's executive director.

Recover Hampton Roads will be a key component, creating a 21st-century-worthy clearinghouse to expedite housing recovery after a severe weather event, which could serve as a model for all communities across the country.

Typical of Old Dominion, we will not do this alone. Under an agreement with the City of Norfolk and Mayor Kenny Alexander, the institute executive director will serve as the city's senior resilience strategist, ensuring a much closer working relationship.

In another partnership, this time with the Commonwealth, we opened the Virginia Institute of Spaceflight and Autonomy at NASA's Wallops Flight Facility on the Eastern Shore. The institute's goal is to generate business and commercialization activity near Wallops.

Being a catalyst for economic growth and entrepreneurship is a growing expectation for higher education across the country, and we are charging full-speed ahead.

Our Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship is moving downtown with its programs geared to veterans, women and procurement assistance. Located in the Innovation Corridor, it will additionally house the Open Seas project, whose task is accelerating innovation and workforce development in maritime and shipping.

Looking across the Elizabeth River, Brooks Crossing, a venture with Newport News Shipbuilding and Huntington Ingalls, opens this weekend in Newport News. A STEM lab will provide cutting-edge experimental opportunities to further encourage K-to-12 students toward digital shipbuilding, science and engineering STEM careers.

Also in Newport News, work has started on a \$12 million lab where Jennifer Michaeli and her team are partnering with LAVLE USA to build nimble hybrid marine vessels for military and commercial applications.

I thank Vice President Morris Foster for demonstrating our commitment as a collaborator to the region and beyond.

Many people believe that for Hampton Roads to flourish, ODU must be at the forefront, which is why I'm announcing the creation of an Economic Development Catalyst Task Force, to be co-chaired by longtime community and state leader Dubby Wynne and Nancy Grden, from the Strome Entrepreneurial Center.

Their task is to further leverage Old Dominion's assets and tighten our connections with business and industry to develop and place talent in high- demand and tech jobs and to accelerate new company formation.

It is crystal clear, thriving communities are those where commercialization and entrepreneurship are spurring both employment growth and investments.

Later this week, we will welcome a freshman class of more than 3,100, equaling our record high of last year. These students will have unbounded opportunities in disciplines across the spectrum.

Under our Tech Talent Pipeline initiative, we offer to increase enrollment in computer sciences and computer engineering - with appropriate state funding - to produce 4,000 graduates over the next two decades to fill growing needs, not just at Amazon but right here in Hampton Roads.

In Virginia Beach, a solid example of our cutting-edge approach is the Center for Telehealth Innovation, Education, and Research, or C-TIER. The center capitalizes on technology to expand and improve health care. In one instance, C-TIER is working with the state to connect pediatricians and nurse practitioners with mental health providers to treat children more effectively.

So it's appropriate that Old Dominion has been named a partner in the Hampton Roads Biomedical Research Consortium, alongside EVMS, UVA, VCU, Sentara and the Hampton Roads Community Foundation. Our collective challenge is to enhance health research capabilities in the region, which will provide synergy with our goal of also establishing a School of Public Health.

On a similar note, Old Dominion joined a collaborative of five universities in Virginia tackling the daunting problem of opioid addiction, supporting prevention and recovery programs.

And we've also positioned ourselves well in advancing offshore wind energy. An MOU, signed with the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy, will assist our own George Hagerman, who recently received Virginia's Renewable Energy Leadership Award.

Some other work by our faculty and staff won national or statewide attention.

One of Remica Bingham-Risher's poems was chosen for publication in The New York Times Magazine by former poet laureate Rita Dove. Other advances, not surprisingly, involved work across multiple colleges.

- Four faculty members from the Batten College of Engineering and Technology and two from the Darden College of Education and Professional Studies jointly received a \$2.4 million NSF grant for teacher preparation.
- The TODAY show featured our multidisciplinary team of Victoria Hill and Petros Katsioloudis, the chair of STEM education, spotlighting their global-warming research in Alaska.
- Also from the College of Sciences, Larry Weinstein wrote in the journal Nature about the groundbreaking work of his Jefferson Lab team.
- In Arts & Letters, John McManus received the American Academy of Arts and Letters' Award in Literature, while The Los Angeles Philharmonic premiered composer Adolphus Hailstork's "Still Holding On."
- From the Strome College, Tim Komarek's research on fracking was cited in the President of the United States' Economic Report, and Jay Walker received a Fulbright.
- Also winning Fulbrights in the Batten College of Engineering were Ariel Pinto and Sachin Shetty.
- In Health Sciences, Muge Akpınar-Elci was named an American Thoracic Society fellow. Steve Morrison - working with the Entrepreneurial Center and his physical therapy colleagues - launched the Balance for Life initiative to prevent falls among seniors.

And let's not forget two colleagues, Ellen Neufeldt and Jim Shaeffer, who have left to become college presidents, Ellen in California and Jim on the Eastern Shore. And I know all of you will join me in congratulating Chip Filer, who will leave our administration and faculty to become the city manager of Norfolk.

Our alumni also reached impressive milestones this past year. With Elaine Luria's election, we now have our first Monarch in Congress. We also cheered our first MacArthur fellow, poet Natalie Diaz, and Ticha Penicheiro was inducted into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame.

Our student-athletes, meanwhile, are excelling competitively, in the classroom and out of it. The men's basketball team reached March Madness, and I know none of us tires of reliving our victory over Virginia Tech in football.

That Tech win, incidentally, was one of seven upsets of top 25 teams achieved across six different sports. In a year, our athletic department, ably led by Wood Selig, will also begin women's volleyball.

But here are the statistics that mean the most to me and hopefully mean the most to you: More than half of our 450 student-athletes made either Dean's List or recorded a 3.0 GPA or better. That's pretty remarkable.

In just a few days, we will unveil our new football home. In gratitude for alumnus Barry Kornblau's generous \$3 million donation, the field is known as Kornblau Field at S.B. Ballard Stadium. I also want to extend my appreciation to Dennis Ellmer and his Priority Auto Group for their \$1.5 million gift to establish the Priority Automotive Club, to Ed and Jan Reed for funding the Givens Presidential Suite Level, and also thanks to TowneBank for its \$1 million donation for a state-of-the-art video board. Could I ask Dennis, colleagues from TowneBank, and Ed and Jan to stand so that we can thank them?

Beyond the stadium, we have \$200 million of capital projects ongoing, all under the watchful eye of Vice President Greg DuBois. Work is underway on the Hugo Owens House, named after our first African American rector. It will open next summer with 470 beds and amenities for STEM-H students. Also opening next fall will be our new Chemistry Building, which will have 2 ½ times more lab space than we currently have on campus.

Following that we have new buildings for the College of Health Sciences and a student health facility on the way.

An example of our commitment to community engagement occurred a few weeks ago, when hundreds attended Old Dominion's 50th anniversary celebration, sponsored by the College of Sciences, of the first moon landing. Learning and fun activities were culminated with the Virginia Symphony Orchestra's performance of a new piece, "From the Earth to the Moon and Beyond," which I was honored to narrate.

With many of our community initiatives, students are at the forefront. Art majors worked with youngsters on a vibrant 1,500-square-foot mural celebrating the Young Terrace neighborhood. And members of Old Dominion's Engineers Without Borders chapter traveled to Guatemala over spring break to design a water distribution system so villagers won't have to walk a mile to get fresh water. One of the students, Rita Meraz, also received the Evon-Broderick Community Engagement Award. Rita, please stand up so we can congratulate you.

But the last few weeks have not been without tragedy for many of us.

Our Monarch family shared the deep pain felt across the region after the terrible shootings in Virginia Beach. A dozen people who made our community better were taken from us. Five were alumni or former students. We mourn for all of them and will keep their memories alive with a memorial to be dedicated soon between Batten Arts and Letters and the Perry Library.

In the past year, we also lost several friends and colleagues. They include former board members George Dragas, Bill Rueger and Bill Russell, deans Chuck Burgess and Don Myers, and faculty and staff including Faye Coleman, Sue Doviak, Imtiaz Habib, Carolyn Rhodes, Dick Whalen and ShaRhonda Nickelson. We are grateful for their contributions, and we honor their memory.

Finally, as we start the year, I want to discuss two other initiatives.

Our work on the University's strategic plan for 2020-2025 moves forward under the leadership of Provost Agho and many of you in this room. From teaching and research to affordability and student success, it will crisply define who we are and what we aim to do, while working within the current

realities of funding and enrollment trends. I do believe our strategic plan must also include a clearer direction for graduate education and internationalization efforts.

Being chairman of the Southeastern Universities Research Association, I am advocating for Jefferson Lab's bid to construct a \$2 billion electron ion collider in Newport News. This would be a huge win, adding hundreds of scientists to our region and expanding opportunities for our faculty and students at Jefferson Lab.

This bold proposal offers one powerful vision of our strategic plan in action. Stuart Henderson, an extraordinary member of our physics department and Jefferson Lab director, has the leading role in this critical endeavor. Stuart, please stand so we can acknowledge your work.

In closing, I must thank so many who day-in-and-day-out walk alongside the Brodericks - from board members including my terrific rector, Lisa Smith, to my office staff, outstanding people from Aramark, buildings and grounds, the police department and the Ted, to the parking personnel, who sometimes - not all the time - turn a blind eye to my creative parking. I believe this morning is one of those moments.

Lastly, to my wife, Kate, with whom I will celebrate a 40th wedding anniversary in September. Beyond what she means to me in her roles as a mother, grandmother, confidante and friend, you should know many of our largest gifts and meaningful community partnerships are a direct result of her too often unnoticed contributions.

The fact that three philanthropic gifts this year were named partially in her honor should convey the respect she garners from those who really understand her value to Old Dominion.

A recent example of that is the naming of the University Suite in Ballard Stadium by Jeff Chernitzer and Billie Roy. I'd like to thank Jeff and Billie, and, most importantly, I'd like to thank Kate for all that she does for ODU.

And as Kate often reminds me, none of us should let doubt or setbacks slow us down. Or as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said:

"Faith is taking the first step, even when you don't see the whole staircase."

My faith in Old Dominion's future has never been stronger. Thanks to all of you for coming this morning. I hope you have a terrific semester and fall season.